

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

Greenhouse Gossip

PUBLISHED MONTHLY FOR THOSE INTERESTED

Vol. 1
No. 2

FIGHT FLORAL CO., Inc.
22 W. 26th Street, New York, N. Y.

APRIL
1942

"An Ounce of Prevention"

You surely have heard that old "saw" many times before, but this is really the time to take heed. There is no question about the eventual scarcity of insecticides and fungicides. Some are no longer being made now, others are in the questionable group. And you can't stock up for a long period, particularly with materials containing pyrethrum and rotenone. Hence, let us consider the means of prevention. This will save much time and spray materials later.

The place to make a start is with the seedling or cutting. First of all, steam sterilization of soil or propagating sand is necessary, but remember that no matter how sterile the sand or soil is after you have steamed it (and steam incidentally will surely not be on the priority list, unless coal or other fuel becomes so, and then it won't matter anyway), it can become readily reinfected by the many fungus spores which float about in the air, become secreted in crevices, under benches, sash bars, etc. So why not dust your propagating house thoroughly with fine sulphur or spray with sulphur (Fungisol is one of the best). Pick out a sunny day and blow away with all your might at the bars, the benches, under benches (or spray). It costs little, hurts no plants, and will pay dividends in higher germination, better rooting, and much less rotting. In addition apply potassium permanganate to your sand (4 oz. to a gallon of water). This

will disinfect your sand and provide a covering in which the spores are not so likely to germinate.

Secondly, be sure that your propagating benches are thoroughly sterilized. Smearing with whitewash alone does not do it—neat looking as it might be. The cuttings you put in should be free of insects and disease. Simple examples are midge on mum cuttings,

red spider on roses, mealy bugs on gardenias, and thrip on innumerable types. Cankered gardenias, geraniums with black leg, roses with canker, carnations with rust, mums with verticillium have no place in the propagating bench. You really will be pleasantly surprised at the after-effects. If added to this you take similar care of your growing houses, if you dust and spray before benching a crop, if you remove weeds

and rubbish from underneath, if you keep the weeds down on the outside, if you remove and burn all diseased plants, if you do all this and more, you will be surprised all the more. Your bills for insecticides and fungicides will decrease, and furthermore in times of scarcity of these materials you will still be able to grow good crops. Perhaps even better than ever, for no matter how harmless the spray or dust is, if it can be done without, the plant will be happier, your labor cost will be lower, and your nightmares of bugs will be reduced to the minimum. (Potassium permanganate, sulphur dusts, arsenical dusts, coppers and similar materials keep their strength for long periods and may be stocked safely.)



Gardens—Always

At the March meeting of the New York Florist Club, the members had the pleasure of listening to that eminent author and public speaker, Mr. Richardson Wright, the editor of House and Garden magazine.

In his interesting talk, he described how flower gardens have persisted through the ages.

In 1633, when the Huguenots were persecuted and driven from France, they came to England to establish themselves in new ways of life. Though surrounded by hardships in such circumstances, they did not overlook establishing their small flower gardens.

In our own United States during the difficult years of Andrew Jackson's administration in the year 1829, one of our first large flower shows was being inaugurated.

More recently, in these times of stress, we have witnessed the gathering of some of our most prominent people connected with Horticulture and Floriculture in Washington at the call of our Secretary of Agriculture, the Honorable Claude R. Wickard. Plans were formulated for the establishing of "Defense Gardens." These Defense Gardens are to be flower gardens as well as vegetable gardens, which shows that there always will be gardens and the members of our industry must feel that they play an important part in the present struggle.

Easter Calendar

It is interesting to look up and down the chart to see how the dates of Easter Sunday vary over a period of 50 years.

Several years ago we printed attractively a list of the dates of Easter Sunday for 50 years. It is convenient for tacking up in your greenhouse shed or office. If you would like to have one of these calendars, drop us a line.

Funny Names

Baby Toes	Emerald Idol
Bunny Ears	Boxing Glove
Irish Mittens	Lion's Tongue

Odd names, perhaps, but in our florist business we know them as the popular names for succulents. As you know the above are varieties of *Opuntia* and *Sedum*. We sell lots of them! Many of our customers find it

profitable to get these succulents and have one of the men in their spare time make up some dishes or terrariums, thus giving them an outlet for some of their artistic skill.

If this interests you, we have a special list covering the most suitable items for this purpose.

The Story of Water

You know, of course that the plant is full of water. If inadequate, it shrivels, becomes stunted, and develops stems and leaves like a cactus. Knowing this, you supply that water to the roots and spray the tops of plants to reduce the amount given off from the leaves. But the roots won't take that water unless air is present. That air is needed to make root hairs which absorb the water. So that's tied up with good soil structure and proper drainage. Be sure of that. Don't use soil that holds too much moisture and be certain that all surplus water runs off. Pot drainage, bench drainage, are essentials. Watch out for them.

The water in the air—humidity, is likewise important. The cells in the plant will not get larger unless humidity is high. This reduces the amount of water lost and permits the cells to stretch. That is why you get longer stretches on roses grown at proper humidity; that is why gardenia flowers are larger when grown in a moist atmosphere; that is why cineraria leaves are of greater size; why the atmosphere is not too dry. Do you attempt to supply such humidity? Do you have any system besides overhead sprinkling, which is time consuming and not constant enough? Skinner nozzles, Paradise nozzles, and lately the Binks system as developed by Ohio State University, are all helpful and should at least be looked into.

There are plants on the other hand which will stretch their stems without too much constant moisture at the roots or in the air. Look at carnations, for example. If the soil is kept too wet and not allowed to dry before watering, loss of roots will result and poor stems. The same is true of snapdragons.

Hence the story of water is one of understanding of what it does and the knowledge of habits of plants which you grow. If you are interested further, drop us a line and we'll go into greater details at a future date. Incidentally, *why not let us know if these discussions interest you?*

Flappers

A number of years ago this was a popular nickname for the girls who rolled their stockings.

F. R. Pierson, the well-known rose grower, who passed away several years ago, referred to some of his 6-year-old rose plants of the variety America, as "flappers" when they lost their foliage and the long stems looked like bare knees.

If your POINSETTIAS at Xmas time begin to lose their foliage, a handy item for fillers are TABLE FERNS. We have a good stock of fern seedlings each summer and they will not be too plentiful this year. Order them now! All the good Pteris varieties and some of the Holly variety are available.

Poinsettia Stock Plants

These will arrive immediately after Easter. But don't let the plants lie around for several days before potting. Do so at once, using a rather poor soil but with plenty of humus in it. That is a rule that if followed generally will result satisfactorily. *No plant in a dormant state or when young requires high amounts of fertilizer in the soil.* The roots develop with the presence of moisture and heat, but no plant food is really needed until the leaves begin to grow. Then gradually the richness of the soil may be increased. Hence, if you use well rotted manure in your poor soil, it will begin to give off some of its value as the plant needs it. The same is true of bone meal or even tankage. Later when tops grow, fertilizers will be added to the soil and incidentally, poinsettia stock plants will take them plenty, especially nitrogen. These fertilizers then should be supplemented with manure mulches to keep the soil from drying out. Enough for the present—propagation will come later.

Tartar Emetic

No question about this being a good spray for thrip on most crops. If you have a supply of this material but cannot get sugar, substitute honey or molasses in the same proportion: 1-2 lbs. of tartar emetic, 3-4 lbs of sweetening, 100 gals. of water.

Hardy Perennials

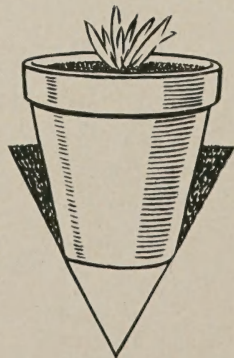
As a sideline, hardy perennial plants are worth growing. They should be started soon, grown on in frames during the summer, fall,

and part winter, and then forced in the spring for quick sale as small flowering plants ready to set out in the garden. The cost of growing these is low and these days that's a consideration. Among the better additions to this group of plants this year are: Royal Red Buddleia, several hardy asters, a beautiful blue Campanula, a brilliant pink Eupatorium, a pink forget-me-not which grows from eight to ten inches high and blooms from June to September, a violet-colored primula and a new blue one. This blue primula is really an accomplishment after many years of waiting and should command a ready demand. For more detailed descriptions, ask us for a list.

Hydrangeas

The hydrangeas this year have been well timed and of good quality. They were particularly important because of the shortage of lilies and undoubtedly will remain quite as important during the next year. The demand for plants these days is for popular-priced kinds and the hydrangea answers that purpose well. It is profitable to grow, sells well and looks substantial. We can furnish you some well rooted cuttings or else $2\frac{1}{4}$ inch plants, now or later. The treatment of these cuttings is simple. Upon arrival, pot in a soil which contains about one-third acid peat so that it retains moisture well and stays acid. Shade for a few days and then grow on in 60 deg. If gotten soon, one pinch will be needed before planting out-doors. Likewise it will be necessary to shift into threes or fours while in the greenhouse. Two methods are used—growing directly in the field or in pots plunged in the field or frame. The field method produces larger canes but in careless hands may cause difficulties in later forcing. If your water is not too alkaline and you have proper facilities for irrigation, then plunging of pots in beds, especially under lath, is an excellent method (by using lath you speed up bud breaking after your July pinch). Incidentally, don't plan to set the plants out before late May, when all danger of frost is over.

Just a tip—if you grow in pots before plunging, make a cone-shaped hole with a stick, so that the bottom of the pot has an air cushion under. This will promote better rooting and keep worms out.



63.61

1242
merrill



Hydrangea—Rooted Cutting



Hydrangea After Potting

HYDRANGEAS

New Hydrangeas for 1942

***MERRITT'S BEAUTY** (*Patented*). An early flowering, dark carmine red. This is a real fine Hydrangea, well liked by those who have seen it.

Rooted Cuttings, \$4.00 per doz., \$20.00 per 100
2 in. pots,\$6.00 per doz., \$30.00 per 100

***NORWOOD** (Robert Craig Introduction) (*Not patented*). A sport of Gertrude Glahn. An unusually strong grower and the natural color is bright pink. Can be treated for blue. Produces large heads of good texture and keeping qualities.

2 1/4 in. pots, . \$30.00 per 100, \$250.00 per 1000

Last Year (1941) Introductions

***Helen Merritt.** *E.* Patented.
Deep rose.

Apollo. *E.* Glowing ruby red.

Aukamm. *M.* Rose pink.

Carmen. Lovely copper red.

Daphne. *E.* Brilliant light red.

***Elbe.** *E.* Pink.

Forschritt. *E.* Red.

Gus. Pink.

Holstein. Pink.

Mme. Cayeux. Light pink.

Meteor. *E.* Brilliant red.

Miss Belgium. Pink.

Regula. *E.* White.

Signy Hartmann. *E.* Dark pink.

Sonnengruss. *E.* Rose.

***Strafford.** Patented. Deep, glowing pink.

Wesphalen. *E.* Clear dark red.

Wiesbaden. *E.* Rose pink.

All above: Rooted Cuttings, \$15.00 per 100; 2 in. pots, \$20.00 per 100.

BETTER VARIETIES

Altoona. *E.* Clear pink.

Europa. *E.* Salmon pink.

Hamburg. *E.* Carmine.

***Kunert.** *M.* Rose pink.

Merveille. *L.* Light red.

***Rosabelle.** *L.* Rose pink.

***Sch. Perle.** *M.* Pink.

Rooted Cuttings, \$10.00 per 100

2-in. pots,\$15.00 per 100

STANDARD VARIETIES

Deutschland. *E.* Salmon pink.

E. Mouillere. *E.* White.

***Gertrude Glahn.** *M.* Dark rose.

***Goliath.** *M.* Dark rose.

M. Baardse. *E.* Salmon red.

***M. Foch.** *E.* Deep carmine.

***Niedersachsen.** *E.* Light pink

***Otaksa.** *L.* Pink.

Steinmetz. *E.* Pink.

Trophee. *E.* Red.

Rooted Cuttings, \$5.00 per 100

2-in. pots,\$8.00 per 100

STANDARD VARIETIES

Ami Pasquaar. *E.* Red.

Gieselherr. *M.* Carmine red.

Hollandia. *L.* Salmon red.

Louis Savage. *L.* Dark pink.

Mein Liebling. *E.* Dark pink.

***Willkommen.** *E.* Bright pink.

Rooted Cuttings, \$8.00 per 100

2-in. pots,\$12.00 per 100

*Blues easily. *E*—Early; *M*—Midseason; *L*—Late.